

My name is Patrick Vingo and I serve on the Council on Developmental Services. The Council is currently comprised of twelve members, ten of whom have family members living with a wide range and severity of intellectual and physical disabilities, and one Self Advocate. Some of our family members are supported by both state and/or private providers, while others live with their families at home with few or no supports.

In your deliberations on the state budget please consider carefully the proposed budget for the Department of Developmental Services. It impacts thousands of I/DD individuals and their families throughout Connecticut.

Three areas of concern outlined in the Governor's budget would severely reduce services that are already stretched thin.

They are :

Voluntary Services Program – The Governor's budget proposes a **\$20MM or 60% reduction** in funding for VSP which supports children and adolescents with ID, Autism and/or severe behavioral health needs

Employment Opportunities and Day Services – The budget **removes over \$10MM** of funding for day supports for high school graduates, and those who may transfer out of STS and other long term care facilities.

Additionally, rescissions of \$5MM in 2015 Employment Opportunities and Day Service **were annualized removing \$10.5MM from the 2016 budget** for existing cases while returning only 58% or \$11.9MM to Day and Residential services for individuals aging out of school funded programs and DCF.

Community Residential Services – While the \$8MM for 100 older waiting list individuals living at home was annualized, no new money was proposed to make further progress against the **waiting list of 2,000** citizens with intellectual disabilities The state cannot wait to begin a systematic reduction of the individuals on this list. As the population ages, families need more help, not less.

Additionally, the most recent rescissions to the **DDS** by the Governor's office have **accounted for 26% of all rescissions in the state**. This is far and away a disproportionate amount from a department that is already unable to fully meet the needs of the population it serves.

We all realize that as legislators there are extreme pressures on you to find a workable and balanced budget to serve the State's constituencies.

In that light I would ask you to consider the fact that people with intellectual disabilities do not suffer from a temporary affliction. Their challenges are life long. They will not "recover" from who they are; nor should they. They fight every day to maintain and develop their dignity, acceptance and inclusion in our cities, towns and neighborhoods. Supports and services to them will never be inexpensive even with the most creative practices but if we are a society that claims to care then that must be borne out by our actions.

Please consider the impact that your budget deliberations will have on these children and adults with intellectual disabilities and the benefits we can realize through their full participation in our communities.

Respectfully,
Patrick Vingo
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Member of the Council on Developmental Services